



Basil

**Basil's started
training school!**

Pupdate 3

Welcome to your February Pupdate

We're excited to share your sponsored pup's recent news!

We can't thank you enough for supporting Guide Dogs by sponsoring one of our incredible dogs. Did you know that nearly three quarters of people of working age who are registered blind or partially sighted are unemployed? At Guide Dogs, we are determined to support the independence of people with sight loss by providing them with the skills and services they need to pursue the life they choose. It's because of kind people like you that we're able to continue doing this. Your support really does make a huge difference!

In 2022, we supported over 4,060 guide dog partnerships and nearly 700 My Sighted Guide partnerships, a service which connects a locally trained volunteer with a person with sight loss. Our fantastically trained dogs and our wonderfully dedicated volunteers help people get out and about while also boosting their confidence. We couldn't provide these services without supporters like you – thank you.

I can't wait for you to read your puppy's latest Pupdate, and I hope you enjoy finding out what they've been getting up to!

Yours sincerely,



Steph Potter

Puppy Sponsorship Manager



Thank you

for sponsoring Basil



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**Hello, it's
Jess here,
Basil's
trainer.**

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I'm a Guide Dog Trainer and have been at Guide Dogs for over a year. Basil is the seventh dog I've trained and my first golden retriever cross! I love building bonds with the dogs and watching them progress from when they first start training to when they've mastered all their guiding skills. It's extremely rewarding when I get to see them guiding and helping to support their owner's independence.

Settling in

Basil is a very laid-back dog and settled in really well both at training school and with his volunteer fosterers. He stayed with me for a few days before going to his fosterers, which helped us develop a strong bond quickly.

He's happy in the office and very content spending time in his pen, which is a safe space where he can relax in between training sessions. He loves spending time there as he gets to do one of his favourite things – sleep! Basil is a happy and affectionate dog. Even though he's not been at training school long, he's already adapted amazingly to his new routine.

Basil's a popular boy; everyone adores him! He's made friends with some fellow dogs in training, Margie and Bill, both Labrador golden retriever crosses. He also loves to go on free runs with his 'pen friend' Oslo, a German shepherd golden retriever cross. When they're having some downtime, they like to lie on their backs and touch noses – it's very cute!

New skills

One new skill is platforms. I started by placing one low platform on the floor and rewarding him whenever he approached it or chose to step onto it. Basil prefers rewards through affection rather than food, but an extra tasty snack still goes down a treat! I now ask Basil to walk onto a low platform, placing all four paws onto it and waiting there for my cue to walk to the next. This skill teaches Basil to walk in a straight line.

Basil is wearing a TTouch harness and I've also started introducing him to his brown training harness. Initially, I put his harness on the floor with some kibble around it to help him build a positive association. Then, I used a hula hoop to introduce the 'head in' cue.



Hear how Basil is settling into training school by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or going to:

guidedogs.org.uk/puppy-basil



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Using a bigger object with more space helps ease him into putting his head through a harness. So far, this is working well for Basil. It's early days, and we'll keep working on this, slowly reducing the size of the object until he's completely comfortable with putting the harness on and having it fastened.

Coming up

Over the next few months, I'll continue working to get Basil comfortable with the training harness and then start introducing some guiding skills whilst in harness. He's a great dog and I'm proud of the progress he's already made.

Thank you for sponsoring Basil. Find out how his training's going in your next Pupdate in June!



Where is Basil on his Pupdate journey?



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The training harness

After around 12-16 months with their puppy raiser, our pups move to training school to learn more specific tasks related to their future career. Introducing a young dog to their brown training harness is one of the first milestones at training school. Most dogs have previously worn their puppy coat, meaning they're familiar with the body sensation. With this as a foundation, we build up to placing the harness on the dog's back and fastening it. Once a dog is partnered, they will wear the iconic white guiding harness.



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